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Season 4: Issue 5 Monday 10th March 2008

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GW EXCLUSIVE: DRUGS & CASH IN THE VPL

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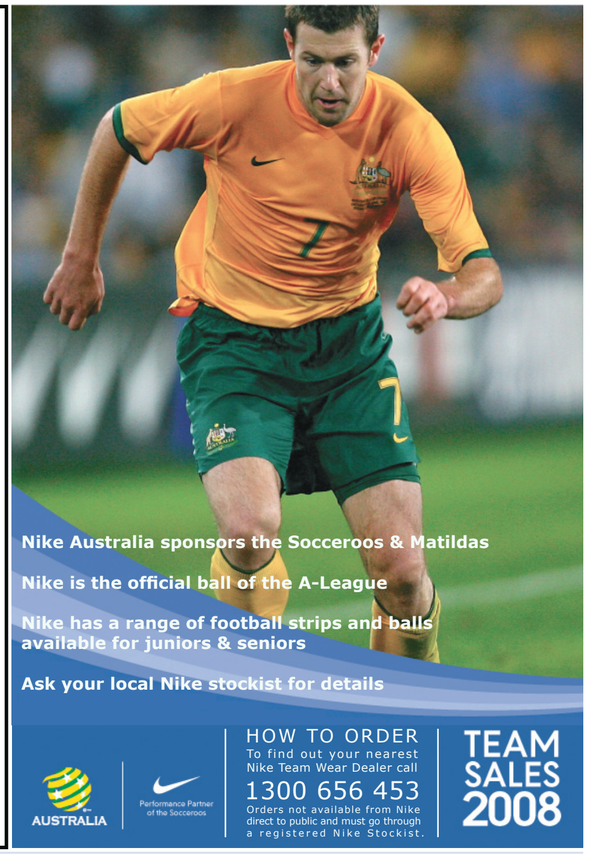

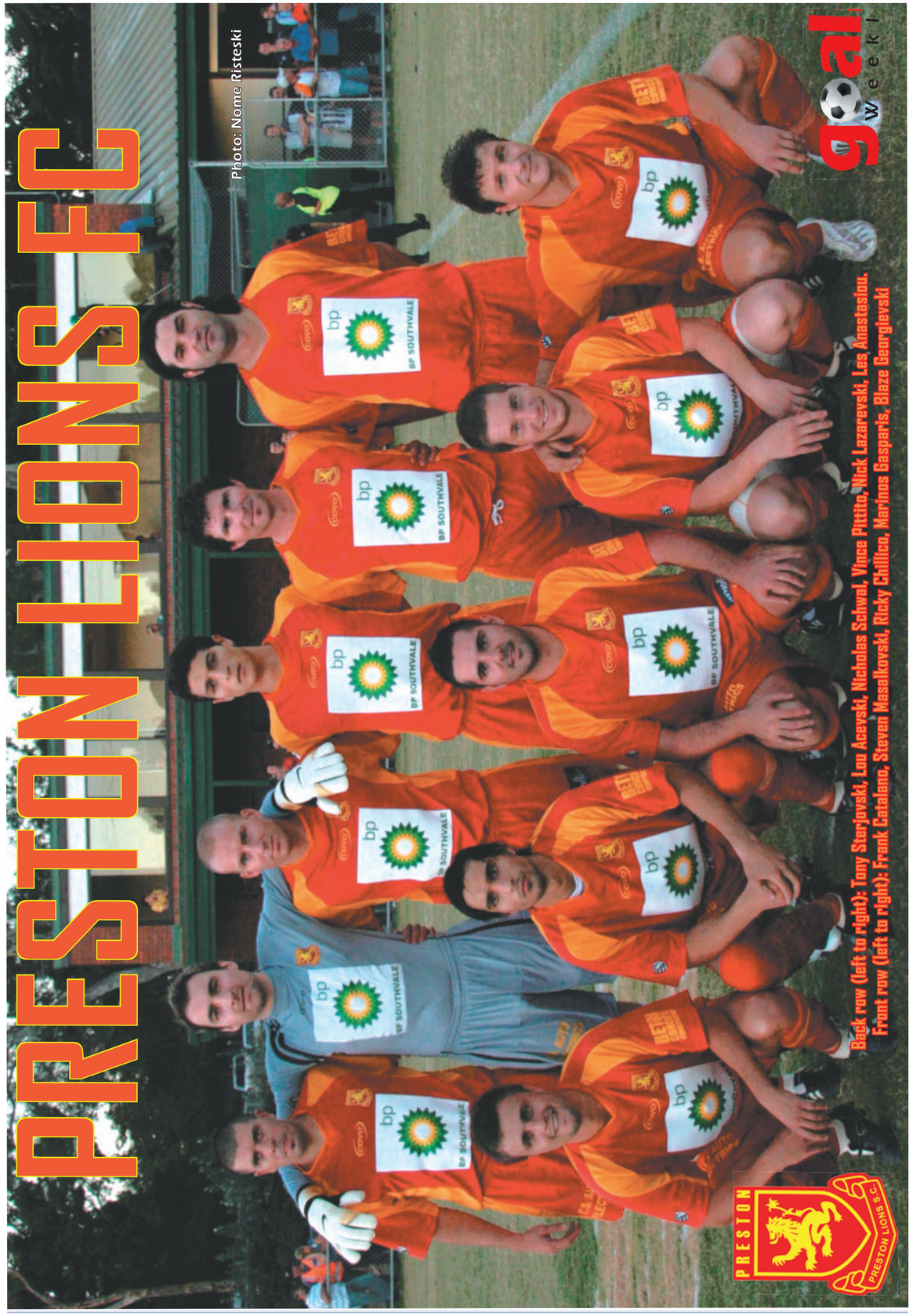

By Craig MacKenzie

OPEN SLATHER ON DRUGS

Great policy, but no police #1

There is no drug testing of Victorian players and unless Football Federation Victoria can find funding there is unlikely to be in spite of our ruling body embracing the extensive and World Anti-Doping Agency-approved anti-doping policy of Football Federation Australia.

FFV, as an umbrella organisation of FFA, is a signatory to its anti-doping policy but the Australian Sports and Drug Administration which conducts testing of athletes has a user-pays contract with FFA.

Until now the prohibitive cost of testing has turned the lauded FFA doping policy into a toothless tiger and if there are drug cheats (including recreational drug users) among Victorian players they continue to flaunt the rules unchecked. Here, in part, is what Article 1 of the FFA policy says: 'FFA aims to stop doping practices in football by: (a) educating and informing persons about drugs in football issues; (b) supporting the drug testing programs and education initiatives of ASADA and other anti-doping organisations; and (c) imposing effective sanctions on persons who commit anti-doping rule violations.'

ASADA only receives federal government funding to conduct 4200 tests a year across all sports and given the number of athletes in competition in Australia, the testing body is often forced to concentrate on testing elite athletes.

The FFA doping policy does not just cover contracted players, it covers every registered player in the land.

A phone poll of six Foxtel Cup coaches conducted late last week confirmed that none of them could recall an anti-doping test being conducted and all expressed surprise that no testing took place.

There is confusion in administrative circles about the cost of testing, one football administrator saying that he believed that a single test costs around $2000. However, an ASADA spokesperson confirmed to Goal! Weekly last week that half-screen out-of-competition tests cost $587 and full-screen in-competition tests costs just over $700.

Should ASADA see fit to spend some federal government money (or FFA foots the bill) it's possible that members of a Victorian junior representative squad could be randomly tested at national championships, which would only enhance the embarrassing nature of a policy that remains incapable of being policed at senior level.

Ebeneezer Goode, ebeneezer no good:
Drug cheats can happily carry about their business with the knowledge that there is no actual drug testing conducted in accordance with the FFA's anti-doping policy.

If only someone could come up with around $5000 then an ASADA 'hit-and-run' testing raid on three players each from competing clubs, say in the Foxtel Cup, would send shockwaves among players who cheat.

At the very least you'd think that we could afford to fund random testing during the Foxtel Cup finals series. As I write the sad truth is that we can't.

Players who are party animals can rest easy if they restrict their splurge to alcohol. WADA's prohibitive substances list states that alcohol is only banned in competition in eight sports and football is not one of them. Fortunately for spectators and officials, archery is on that WADA list.

OPEN SLATHER ON WAGES

Great policy, but no police #2

There used to be a salary cap in the Victorian Premier League. Prior to being scrapped by the FFV board late last year it had been raised from $150,000 to $180,000.

That's right, all those big-spending Foxtel Cup clubs had a total player payment bill of just $180,000 in 2007. And the band played 'Believe it if you like'.

The truth of the matter is that player payments regularly exceeded the salary cap. One club had player payments well above the $600,000 mark, a $420,000 breach of the salary cap.

Apparently, it worked like this. Contracts for first team squad members were lodged at FFV headquarters where they were added up and if the total did not exceed $180,000 then that was the end of the matter. Simply put, FFV could not afford to properly police the policy.

"If I'd had another $300,000 or $400,000 then maybe the policy could have been retained," said FFV CEO Mark Rendell.

"It became clear that it was a waste of time having a policy that could not be administered properly."

Sadly, through no fault of the federation, the floodgates are open once more and clubs like Green Gully with its massive poker machine revenue will continue to thrive in such a laissez faire environment.

It's now glaringly obvious that there are two ways that ambitious clubs can best compete with the big boys. One is to have an extremely wealthy benefactor (or benefactors), the other is to have a club-owned business that generates serious dollars. Among clubs using the second option is First Division outfit Southern Stars which has a successful car-washing business.

Kingston City's time in the VPL was a trypical example of how a club can flaunt the salary cap rules in its quest for success.

A recent recruit to a First Division club will be paid $500 a game this season and there were clubs in First Division last season who were paying as much as $600 a game. For some First Division rivals that is very hard to compete with when trying to entice players. And for clubs in the lower leagues who dream about one day mixing it with the elite, it makes that day seems light years away.

goal! Weekly

This week's line-up

Soccer Hotlines	3
Foxtel Cup Scoreboard	4
Cannons v South	5
AIS v Coburg	6
Lions v Bergers	7
Suburbs v Magic	8
Knights v Zebras	10
Football Feature	11
Gully v Pines	12
Blues v Eagles	13
Football Focus	14
Boo & Katsa	15
Interstate Football	18
Win a pair of Puma boots	20
Blast From The Past	21
Tartan Talk	22

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FOXTEL CUP STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Richmond	4	3	1	0	14	3	10
A.I.S	4	3	1	0	11	5	10
Melbourne Knights	4	2	2	0	8	4	8
Altona Magic	4	2	2	0	6	3	8
Oakleigh Cannons	4	2	2	0	4	2	8
Coburg Utd	4	2	1	1	7	4	7
Green Gully Cavaliers	4	2	1	1	2	2	7
Heidelberg Utd	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Preston Lions	4	1	2	1	5	8	5
South Melbourne	4	1	0	3	7	5	3
Western Suburbs	4	1	0	3	1	10	3
Frankston Pines	4	0	1	3	4	7	1
Whittlesea Zebras	4	0	1	3	3	9	1
Fawkner Blues	4	0	0	4	2	12	0

RESULTS

Oakleigh Cannons	1 - 0	South Melbourne
AIS	2 - 2	Coburg United
Melbourne Knights	2 - 1	Whittlesea Zebras
Western Suburbs	0 - 2	Altona Magic
Fawkner Blues	0 - 5	Richmond Eagles
Preston Lions	2 - 2	Heidelberg United
Green Gully Cavaliers	1 - 0	Frankston Pines

UNDER 21 DETAILS

Oakleigh Cannons 0 South Melbourne 0, V.I.S 1 Coburg Utd 4, Western Suburbs 0 Altona Magic 4, Fawkner Blues 0 Richmond 4, Green Gully Cavaliers 5 Frankston Pines 0, Melbourne Knights 2 Whittlesea Zebras 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Richmond	3	3	0	0	12	4	9
Richmond	4	4	0	0	16	4	12
Green Gully Cavaliers	4	3	0	1	10	2	9
Coburg Utd	4	3	0	1	7	4	9
Melbourne Knights	4	2	1	1	6	9	7
Oakleigh Cannons	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
South Melbourne	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
V.I.S	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Whittlesea Zebras	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Preston Lions	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Altona Magic	4	1	0	3	4	6	3
Frankston Pines	4	0	2	2	1	7	2
* Fawkner Blues	4	1	1	1	2	4	1
Heidelberg Utd	3	0	1	2	6	11	1
* Western Suburbs	4	1	0	2	2	5	0

*Deducted 3 pts.

THE TOP MARKSMEN

Player, Club	Goals
Naidovski, Jason A.I.S	6
Cardozo, Pablo Richmond SC	5
Josifovski, Alexander Coburg United FC	4
Catalano, Michael Richmond SC	4
Cardozo, Richard Richmond SC	3
Danning, Kofi A.I.S	3
Milardovic , Tom Melb Knights FC	2
Pelikan, Anthony Melb Knights FC	2
Sterjovski, Tony Preston Lions	2

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ROUND FIVE FIXTURES

RICHMOND EAGLES
V
ALTONA MAGIC
Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Friday 14 March
KO 8:15PM

OAKLEIGH CANNONS
V
WESTERN SUBURBS
Jack Edwards Reserve
Friday 14 March
KO 8:30PM

COBURG UTD
V
PRESTON LIONS
Knights Stadium
Saturday 15 March
KO 6:00PM

FRANKSTON PINES
V
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS
Monterey Reserve
Sunday 16 March
KO 5:00PM

HEIDELBERG UTD
V
GREEN GULLY
Olympic Village
Sunday 16 March
KO 5:00PM

WHITTLESEA ZEBRAS
V
FAWKNER BLUES
Epping Stadium
Monday17 March
KO 8:15PM

SOUTH MELBOURNE
V
AIS
Bob Jane Stadium
Monday 24th March
(Easter Monday)

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

1 - 0

SOUTH MELBOURNE

EARLY CANNON FIRE DEFEATS SOUTH

Lagana strike seals derby win

It was a case of the early bird catching the worm at Jack Edwards reserve on Friday night. Cannon's energetic midfielder Frankie Lagana's fifth minute strike gave Oakleigh a prized 1-0 victory over fierce rivals South Melbourne.

And whilst Lagana's early strike proved the difference on the scoreboard, Cannons' fans could be thankful for a dogged defensive display and another high quality performance in goal by keeper Adrian Cagalj which kept a threatening South Melbourne at bay.

After conceding early, the visitors pressed forward cheered on by their vocal fans. With the memory of their teams' 5-0 win the previous week still fresh in their minds, the travelling fans had reason for optimism that De Moraes and company would find an equalizer. An early pass from Bill Natsioulas found South striker Hamlet Armenian with space in the box, but his first touch was a little heavy allowing Cannons skipper Felix Rosman to slide the ball to safety.

South continued to push forward with some good approach work, but too often the final pass went astray.

Their best chance of the first half came from a corner which South defender Shane Nunes headed towards goal forcing an excellent Cagalj save.

Soon after the break, another South defender Adam Van Dommele had a great chance to score only to find Cagalj once more in the way. A third South defender, ex-Cannon Sam Poutakidis must've thought he was going to score his second goal in two weeks when Armenian's pass released him on the right side. However he blazed wide without testing the keeper.

With South threatening an equalizer, Cannons coach Stuart Munro brought on defensive midfielder Scott Webster for the more attacking Trent Waterson. South responded by introducing more attacking ammunition, first in the person of Ricky Diaco followed by Yusuf Yusuf and Nathan Caldwell.

But despite the attacking options, it wasn't until injury time when they were able to fashion a clear cut chance on goal. To the cries of " Go Shakespeare", Hamlet Armenian broke into space on the right. But alas for South, his goal bound shot took a deflection onto the bar, before the Cannons defence scrambled the ball to safety.

Oakleigh's win, which continues its undefeated start to the season and its third clean sheet in a row, prompted Coach Munro to praise his team's defensive effort after the game: " We were very fortunate for the late signing of Cagalj because we know he's a quality keeper. He's proved his worth again tonight. For the team to show the sort of determination to make sure they hold on to that early goal, is good for the club to see."

"Because South Melbourne, make no bones about it, although they're a very young side, they're a very high quality, quick, lively side. I thought they played very well and put us under a lot of pressure. But I thought we defended very well, not just our defenders but also our midfielders. Young Mattie Foschini made his debut on the wide right. I thought he had a very good game."

South Melbourne Coach John Anastasiadis said of his team after the game, " I thought the team's performance was fantastic. We thoroughly deserved to get something out of the game but that's football. Probably at times our final ball could have been better. It was a bit rushed today. We were a much better team. But at the end of the day, it's about results. We didn't get the result and we're very disappointed but we soldier on."

Match details:

Cannons: A. Cagalj, A. Ewin, A.Drakos, T. Apostolikas (M. Lujic 64'), F. Rosman, F.Lagana (MacNicol 71'), S. Drakos., J. Nilo, B. Damianos, T. Waterson (S.Webster 64'), M. Foschini

Scorer: Lagana 5'

Yellow cards: Lagana 66'.
Red cards: None

South Melbourne: D.Anastasiadis, S. Nunes, A. Van Dommele, S. O'Dor, H. Armenian, V. Natsioulas, G. Zoric (Y. Yusuf 76'), T. Laverde, F. DeMoraes (R. Diaco 67'), G. DeNittis (N. Caldwell 80'), S. Poutakidis

Yellow cards: Natsioulas 57', Zoric 65', O'Dor 72'.
Red cards: O'Dor 90+'.

Man of the Match:
Felix Rosman
(Oakleigh Cannons)

Crowd: 3,000
Venue: jack Edwards Reserve

By George Stogiannou

Photos by George Stogiannou

Sth Melbourne's Adam Van Dommele and Steve O'Dor bring down Oakleigh's Frankie Lagana just outside the penalty area. The Cannons made some strong claims for a penalty, but the referee awarded a free-kick instead and issued a yellow card to O'Dor - who was to also receive his marching orders later on in the match.

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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

2 - 2

COBURG UNITED

TOP QUALITY AFFAIR IN CAPITAL

Coburg halts AIS perfect record

Coburg United has brought the Australian Institute of Sports' perfect start to the Foxtel Cup season to an end by holding the talented youngsters to a high quality 2-2 draw in Canberra on Saturday.

In a pretty even contest played on an imaculate surface both teams experienced their fair share of possession and a share of the points was a fitting finale for this entertaining contest between two teams occupying solid positions in the Foxtel Cup Top Six. Heading into the fixture the AIS were the current league leaders of the competition and with this result will still be able to maintain pole position. Coburg was nicely perched in third place and early season form indicates it should be able to maintain the standard set in its debut season in elite company.

The AIS came out of the blocks firing and within the first ten minutes opened the scoring. Amid early pressure from the home side Coburg were unable to deal with a cross launched deep into the penalty box, a scrambled ensued after the ball was headed towards the goals from the back post and promising youngster Luke De Vere was on hand to scramble the ball over the goal-line.

Not to be outdone, Coburg was quick to pull back onto level terms and on the 18th minute Alex Josefovski clinched his fourth goal in as many games when he finished a fine move which started in midfield. Andy Vlahos played a lovely through ball to Josefovski who latched onto the pass and slotted the ball away beautifully as AIS 'keeper Mark Birighitti came off his line to close the angle.

Just after the hour mark Coburg was rewarded for its period of dominance in the match when it managed to get its noses in front and for the first time this season the AIS had actually fallen behind in a Foxtel Cup match.

A free-kick by Anthony Magnacca was met at the back post by Sime Kovacevic who steered his driven header into the back of the net to make the score 2-1 in favour of the visitors.

Although faced with an unfamiliar situation the AIS persevered forward, and too their credit managed to level terms with fifteen minutes left on the clock.

Once again Coburg failed to deal with another cross from a resultant corner and unfortunately paid the price when the AIS scrambled what some might say to be a dubious equaliser. Jason Naidovski proved his prowess in the box once again and got the final touch to the ball which was seemingly cleared off the goal-line by the Coburg defense, but with referee Sergio Tercerro's view partly obstructed and the linesman not providing much assistance, a spate of confusion and appeals followed, but ultimately a goal was awarded and the scores were deadlocked for the second time in the match. It was the sixth goal for Naidovski this season, who leads the goalscorers charts.

Both teams attempted to find a winner in the remaining ten minutes, but when the final whistle blew no one could argue that a draw was not a fair result.

In a bid to avoid match day logistical dramas as encountered by Frankston Pines in the first match played in Canberra this season, Coburg actually flew to the capital the night before in preparation for the match with the league leaders.

After the match Joe Montemurro told Goal! Weekly, "I thought that both teams played some really good football and it was a good spectacle for all fans. I think the trip to Canberra was a worthwhile experience for us to bond and build some team spirit. We've got a fairly new side and hopefully the exercise will help the club and the boys come together. I still think we won't really click until round eight or nine, but overall we created some good chances and I was happy with our performance. Montemurro also went on to add that his travelling party was treated "very, very well" by their hosts over the weekend.

Next week, Coburg plays reigning champions Preston Lions at Knights Stadium on Saturday, while the AIS won't be in action until the following weekend when it meets South Melbourne on Easter Monday at Bob Jane Stadium.

Match details:

AIS:
M.Birighitti, D.Mullen, D.Milardovic, R.Greer, A.Sunasky, L.De Vere, K.Danning, J.Naidovski, D.Taylor (I.Pavlak 63'), H.Fondyke (M.Theodore 57'), A.Cicak (L.Braude 76').

Scorers: L.De Vere 9', J.Naidovski 75'.

Yellow cards: Greer 26', Sunasky 37', Fondyke 57', Taylor 61'.
Red cards: None

Coburg United:
A.Hrehoresin, S.Kovacevic, M.Mustafa, P.Tichy, R.Thompson, A.Magnacca, B.Gilmour, A.Vlahos, A.Josefovski, F.Richards (E.Garcia 58'), S.Pir.

Scorers: A.Josefovski 18', S.Kovacevic 64'.

Yellow cards: Richards 12', Hrehoresin 73', Vlahos 76'.
Red cards: None

Crowd: 150
Venue: AIS Fields, Canberra

By James Taylor

Photo by Liam Bentley

Coburg United players Fidell Richards and Anthony Magnacca gather to embrace scorer Alex Josefovski after equalising against Foxtel Cup league leaders, the AIS, in Canberra on Saturday. Keeper Mark Brighitti's body language suggests he's not too pleased with the outcome. Some of the crowd in the background don't look so sure about it either.

PRESTON LIONS

2 - 2

HEIDELBERG UNITED

CHAMPS HOIST FROM CANVASS

Lions overturn two goal deficit

Preston and Heidleberg met each other at BT Connor Reserve today on a sweltering hot day to play one of the most eagerly awaited derbies of the season. A smaller than usual crowd of about 1,500 showed up to watch the clash.

League positions usually mean nothing when these 2 sides meet and this was no exception, the winner on the day would be the team that was the most hungriest

With all the above going for the game it started off very disappointingly, as the game was bogged down in the middle with both defenses at the top of their game, and goalmouth action at a premium.

This changed 14 minutes into the game when Heidelberg won a corner. The resultant corner was poorly dealt by the Preston defense when an attempted clearance was miscued over Acevski's head to the feet of Liparotti who tapped in Heidelbergs first goal.

The goal slowed the Preston down considerably and the next noticable event in the game came in the 26th minute when Masalkovski gave the ball away cheaply some 35 meters out and the resultant cross into the 6 yard box was just missed by the sliding attempt of Tsiorlas.

Kozic should have made a better attempt on goal from18 metres out but his miscued shot went out for a goalkick. Heidelberg had taken full control of the game by now and Kozic was unlucky to be judged offside with only the keeper to beat seconds later.

Preston's inability to threaten Heidelberg was siezed upon by the Warriors as they themselves threatened again by an unmarked Tsiorlas but his volley was well wide off the mark.

There is never a short of contraversy when these 2 teams play and today would be no different, Lazarevski was put through into the Heidelberg penalty area, his first effort was well saved by Sutalo but his second effort looked like it struck the outstretched hand of a Heidelberg defender and as the Preston players and fans alike appealed for the penatly the assistant and referee both waved play on much to the displeasure of all at BT Connor Reserve.

The game petered of till the whistle for halftime.

Blaze Georgievski came on for Nick Lazarevski for the start of the second half, but it was Heidelberg that were on the front foot when a forward foray by them was stopped by Masalkovski illegally according to the referee, the resulting freekick was superbly saved by the Preston keeper Acevski.

Drossos was a constant thorn in the Preston defense, in the 51st he made some room for a shooting opportunity but his effort was well save Acevski low to his right.

Preston was by now taking grips of the game and Chillico should have done better from inside the box than ballooning the ball well over the goal.

But it was inevitabe that Heidelberg would take advantage of Preston push for the equaliser, and on 53 minutes Tsiorlas made them pay with Heidelbergs second goal.

Going down 2 nil was what was needed it appeared as Preston came out of their shell and Kolevski should have put one back for the Lion's as he was put through by Anastasiou but his attempted lobb was well saved by Sutalo.

Both coaches started to make changes but it was Lozanovksi that benifited the most, Catalano came on for Chillico and made an instant impact when he scored with a deflected shot to send the ball over Sutalo into the goal.

Preston had the bit btween their teeth and it came as no suprise when they equalised through Gasapris who was found easily by Kolevski for the easiest tap in he is likely to see all season.

Sterjovski was the real threat to Heidelberg for Preston and his pinpoint crosses were causing hovac in the Heidelberg defense, Igor Kolevski missed another glorious chance from a Sterjovski cross when he balllooned the ball well over the bar from only 8 metres out with only the keeper to beat.

Georgievski nearly caught Sutalo of his line from 40 metres out but his cheeky effort was just saved by the big Heidelberg keeper, and 30 seconds later Hockless nearly caught Acevski off guard but his 18 metre effort just sailed past the upright with Acevski scrambling to get across.

Georgievski could have and should have won all 3 points for Preston when Sapazovski found him free in the Heidelberg box but his poor effort only found the hands of Sutalo in the Heidelberg goal.

In the end Preston would be the more agrieved of the 2 sides and will look at this as 2 points dropped when it looked like they had lost the game early on and Heidelberg would feel they were lucky to get one point when it looked like they all 3 in the bag.

Match details:

Preston Lions:
Scorers: Catalano 62', Gasparis 75'.

Heidelberg United:
Scorers: Liparotti 14', Tsiorlas 53'.

Man Of The Match:
Tony Sterjovski (Preston)

Crowd: 1,500
Venue: BT Connor Reserve

Preston's Marinos Gasparis makes the comback complete by tapping in the equaliser from six yards out, as the Lions fough tback from a two goal deficit to draw with Heidelberg United 2-2.

By Nome Risteski

Photos by Nome Risteski

FUTSAL SUPER 5's

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WESTERN SUBURBS

0 - 2

ALTONA MAGIC

ALTONA'S MAGIC RUN CONTINUES

Suburbs hard done by after squandering chances

Altona Magic continued their good start to the season with a 2-0 win over Western Suburbs at the Ralph Reserve on Sunday.

An early goal from Henry Fa'arodo and Michael Curcija's fifth goal of the season in the second half gave the Magic all three points, although Suburbs can consider themselves unlucky after missing several late chances.

Despite the 5:00pm kick off the match was played under sweltering conditions, with both sides struggling early to find fluency early on.

Doug Mladenovic was forced to clear the ball off the goal line after a scramble in the penalty area in the 13th minute, but this was as close as Suburbs would come to scoring in the opening period.

Henry Fa'arodo kept Suburbs keeper Stepan Gal on his toes in the 18th minute when he ran onto Carl Recchia's chipped ball but Gal was first to the ball and smothered Fa'arodo's shot.

But there was no denying the Solomon Island's international just two minutes later as he put the Magic a goal up.

Again Recchia was the provider, his low ball across the area finding Fa'arodo in space, and his shot on the turn found its way under the defender and the diving Gal.

The Magic doubled their lead in the 64th minute thanks to Michael Curcija's fifth goal of the season.

Curcija lost his marker and found the ball on the edge of the area, his shot too powerful for Gal to stop.

But after getting the goal, the Magic seemed to take their foot off the pedal and allowed Suburbs back into the game.

First substitute Reno Damianou hit the crossbar from close range in the 79th minute, then it was Bill Sianidis' turn to rattle the woodwork just five minutes later.

In the 90th minute Suburbs had their best chance of the game when Dimi Hatzimouratis missed an open goal from just five metres out, capping off a frustrating day for under pressure coach Con Papas.

Papas was visibly disappointed after the game but was proud of his teams endeavour.

"It was one of those games. We knew Altona would only need one or two chances and they could get a goal. We deserved to come out of it with more but that's how it goes," said Papas.

I don't think they were that much better than us. I was disappointed with the goals we conceded; we were just a bit naïve. But we'll keep going," he said.

Match details:

Western Suburbs: S. Gal, J. Cvetanoski, M. Batur, A. Tsonis, E. Cetkin (R.Damianou 69'), I. Razov (K.Tsioukis 79'), T.Antoniadis, L. Kindtner, B. Sianidis, D. Hatzimouratis, T. Razov (E.Karavitis 65').

Scorers: none

Yellow Cards: T. Razov 57',
Red Cards: none

Altona: B. Jevdevic, S. Mrkela, C. Anthopoulos, D. Mladenovic, H. Fa'arodo (J.konyit 88'), C. Recchia, M. Curcija, P. Siveski, A. Sherifovski (G.Lambadarisis 88'), T. McSorley, P. Cergovski (J.Dulecevski 90').

Scorers: H. Fa'ardo 20', M. Curcija 64'

Yellow Cards: D. Mladenovic 91'
Red Cards: none

Man of the match:
Carl Recchia
(Altona magic0

Crowd: 150
Venue: Ralph Reserve

By Lachlan Taylor

Photo by Faniel Flis

Foxtel Cup action from Ralph Reserve . In swltering conditions that reached the mid 30s, Altona's James Duvcevski (No 16) clears the ball on the way to a 2-0 win against Suburbs.

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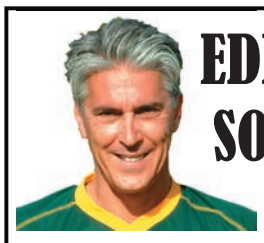

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Saturday March 8th

Reserves	12.00	Southern Stars V Sandringham Pitch 2
Seniors	2.00	Southern Stars V Sandringham Pitch 1
Reserves	2.00	Eastern Lions V Cranbourne Pitch 2
Seniors	4.00	Eastern Lions V Cranbourne Pitch 1

Saturday March 15th

Reserves	12.00	Sandringham V Cranbourne Pitch 2
Seniors	2.00	Sandringham V CranbournePitch 1
Reserves	2.00	Eastern Lions V Southern Stars Pitch 2
Seniors	4.00	Eastern Lions V Southern Stars Pitch 1

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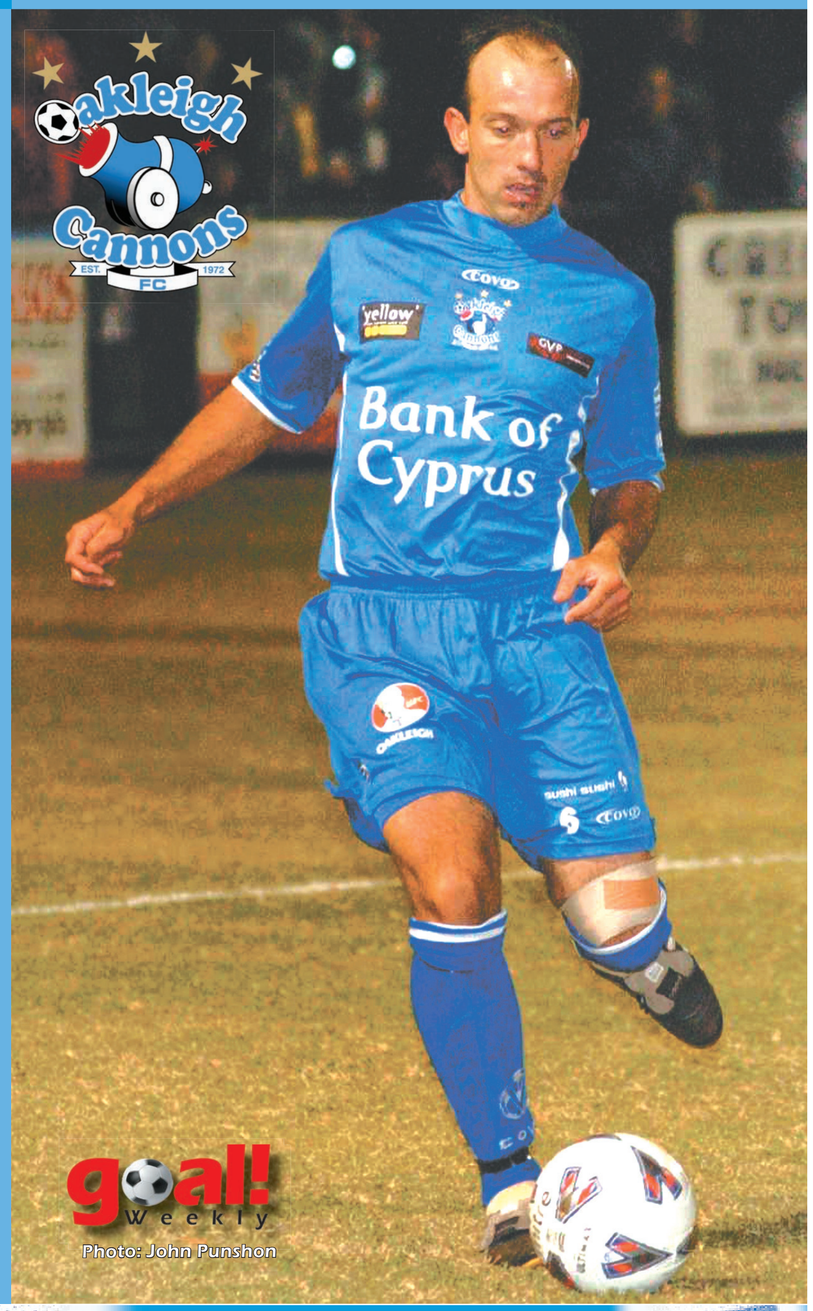
STELIOS DRAKOS

OAKLEIGH CANNONS FC

FULL NAME: Stelios Drakos
BIRTHPLACE: Melbourne
BIRTH DATE: 15/07/1975
HEIGHT: 178
WEIGHT: 74kg
MARRIED: Yes, to Eustra.
CAR: Ford XR8 Ute
OCCUPATION OUTSIDE OF FOOTBALL: Builder
NICKNAME: Stel
PREVIOUS CLUBS:Whittlesea/Bulleen Zebras, Bentleigh Greens, South Melbourne
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: Victorian State Team – 2002/03/04/05/06
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Pele
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Steven Gerrard
FAVOURITE FOXTEL CUP PLAYER: Ari Drakos
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: Mehmet Durakovic
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Tim Cahill
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: VPL Final 04 (We won!)
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: Australia vs Uruguay
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: Bulleen vs Oakleigh 2004
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Josip Kozic taking a corner in 2007!
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Injuries
WORST INJURY: Knee
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: The late Peter Kakos
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Epping (for the playing surface not the drive!)
SUPERSTITIONS: None
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Subway Chicken Fillet
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Tackling and communicating
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Height
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: South Melbourne Hellas
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Motorsport
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Michael Schumacher and Dick Johnson
FAVOURITE FOODS: Pasta and Orexi Souvlaki
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Al Pacino & Robert De Niro
HOBBIES: Go-Karting, Golf
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Greek islands
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: It's been a while!
IDEAL DATE: Wife
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: Entourage
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Various
FAVOURITE FILM: Heat
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: Barcelona top for my brother!
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: Transfer whispers
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: Harry Chalkitis & Gary Cole
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Training
FOOTBALL AMBITION: One more championship medal
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? : Muhammad Ali
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S FOXTEL CUP: Oakleigh Cannons



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1954-1968

EARLY DAYS OF CROATIA IN VICTORIA

Reflecting on the foundation days of a club steeped in history

With Dinamo Zagreb about to visit Melbourne in June it is a good time to reflect on the story of the Croatian clubs Victoria since the 1940s. In 1949 Hajduk Split was one of the first overseas teams to tour Australia playing twenty matches in all including two test matches against the national team. The team were sponsored by the Yugoslavian government and were referred to in the press as Yugoslavia. Victoria gained a draw with the visitors on 10 August, four days after the Australian team had been hammered by them at the MCG.

Croatia prior to the Dockerty Cup final of 1968 at Olympic Park.
Back Row, Left to right: Frank Burin (Secretary), Horst Rau (captain), Mirko Kovacek, Billy McArthur, Frank Bot, Hugh Gunn, Mijo Kiss (coach), Jimmy Mackay, Duncan Mackay, Peter Davies, Zlatko Balic (Reserve goalkeeper), Ivan Mustapic (Property Steward).
Front Row: Billy Vojtek, Brian Adlam, Alfred Glaser, Hammy McMeechan, Billy McIntyre. Photo courtesy of Frank Burin.

In 1954 a local Croatian team took part in the first season of the Victorian Provisional League finishing second in a six-team league. The following year another Melbourne club, Hajduk was founded and also a team in Geelong where many migrants found work at Ford and International Harvester. The Geelong club proved very strong on the field and regularly defeated Croatia Melbourne and Hajduk in friendly matches. This eventually led to a take-over of the Melbourne Croatian club by the Geelong club led by Joe Radojevic in 1957. In 1959 Croatia, playing at Corio Oval in Geelong won the First Division North from Preston.

After the season was over, the Preston club, which came second to Croatia, protested against Lions, which finished third in the league, won the protest, got two points after the end of the season and jumped over Croatia into the State League. The Liepold brothers who ran Preston now found themselves in a dilemma, since they had not expected or planned to be in the State League, and several of their players had left for other clubs. They approached the Secretary of Croatia and offered an amalgamation, in which Croatia would bring its players to Melbourne and play as Preston in the State League.

Some members of the club favoured the amalgamation, others preferred to remain independent and achieve promotion under the Croatian name. The Geelong based club continued in the First Division, while Preston played in the State League but was relegated at the end of 1960. In 1961 Croatia Geelong continued in Division One North at Corio Oval and finished third. That year Preston Croatia won the First Division South without losing a game and was promoted to the State League as Croat. Between the 1961 and 1962 seasons the breakaway from the old VASFA took place with Preston Croatia joining the Victorian Soccer Federation group. Croat just managed to keep itself clear of relegation in 1962, finishing in tenth place in the State League. The team known as Croatia was still in Division One North, but it now moved its ground to Maribyrnong Speedway. Croatia won the First Division North championship in 1962. This would have meant two Croatian teams playing in the State League in 1963 and competing for the same loyalties and resources. The Croatian community was divided on what to do. Probably the majority opposed a merger between the clubs, but it was eventually completed with Enver Begovic as President, Franjo Burin, Secretary, Harry Mrksa, Treasurer and Ivo Marinovic as Chairman.

Once again the amalgamation caused great heart-searching in the community, especially when the club failed to fulfil expectations on the field. It was relegated at the end of 1963. The set back was temporary, for Croatia won First Division North by two points from Makedonia in 1964, after beating Makedonia in the last game of the season by three goals to one. Croatia was promoted to the State League once again where it finished sixth in 1965. It was the 'Glamour Team' of 1965, according the Victorian Soccer Federation Yearbook. The early season form was poor, six of the first seven games were lost, and it looked as if Croatia would go back down again, but a clear-out of players and the attraction of Duncan Mackay, formerly with Glasgow Celtic, and a number of other players resulted in a transformation in the second half of the season when it finished with eleven wins. Croatia was also runner-up in the Dockerty Cup in 1965.

Croatia won the State League for the first time in 1968. Coached by Mirko Kiss it finished as champion seven points clear of Polonia. Only four league games were lost all season. The final match against Juventus was won by three goals to one and the team which played was Mirko Kovacek, Duncan Mackay, Frank Bot, Horst Rau, Hugh Gunn, Hammy McMeechan, Billy Vojtek, Bill McIntyre, Davies, Jimmy Mackay, Alfred Glaser. Croatia had the ball in the net six times, but three were disallowed. The goals which counted were scored by Bill McIntyre, Croatia's top scorer for the season, Jimmy Mackay and Billy Vojtek. In addition Croatia won the Ampol Cup and the Dockerty Cup to complete an extraordinary triumph.

Proof that Croatia did win the 1959 First Division North as the banner held by Dinko Paleka, xx, Vera Paleka, Josip Bebic, Mark Viduka, Damian Vojtek and Vinko Buljubasic shows. (Photo: Roy Hay taken in 1993.)

TheVictorian team at half-time in the match against Hajduk Split on 10 August 1949.
Back row, left to right: Tom Jack (captain) Kennedy, Hardman, Weight, White, McDougall.
Front row: Grix, Alec Barr, Stoddart, Wilson, Angus Drennan.
Photo: Soccer News, 1 April 1950, p. 1.

Words by Roy Hay

Photos provided by Roy Hay

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS
1 - 0
FRANKSTON PINES

UP AND ADAMS FOR CAVALIERS

Second win in a row for Gully

A superb diving header by Scottish Midfielder John Adam five before the half-time break, was enough to get the Green Gully Cavaliers over the line at Green Gully Reserve against the Frankston Pines.

Andy Vargas setup the chance with good play down the right wing, finding John Adam unmarked with a perfect cross to the back post. Before that, there were a few half chances for both teams, none all that threatening, the closest falling for Joel Nikolic, whose low shot on goal was pushed past the goalpost and out to safety by Frankston goalkeeper Nick Roganovic.

The Pines came to Green Gully Reserve, with just one point from three games, however were always a danger team, with the forward line consisting of bulky strikers Nick Waite and last year's league leading goalscorer Esala Masi. Whilst Nick Waite did get a few chances on goal, a few touches of the ball here and there, Gully's Mile Medjedovic did an excellent job in keeping Esala Masi quiet on the night.

In the second half, Coach Ian Dobson gave Kiwi striker Campbell Banks his first run for the year, in place of Joel Nikolic, and about twenty minutes from time, Matthew Sanders on for Koce Delev.

The introduction of the pair saw many golden chances fall Green Gully's way, but also many chances wasted in unforgivable circumstances.

Coach Ian Dobson was delighted to hear the final whistle, but frustrated with the wasted chances on goal. He acknowledged the result of the Green Gully Under 21 team, who ran out 5-0 winners over Frankston Pines, where youngster Aziz Behich scored all five goals.

Match details:

GREEN GULLY:
S.Tilovski, S.Burton
D.Fak, J.Fleming, K.Delev (M.Sanders 75'), J.Adam, R,Ollerton, D.Nastevski, M.Medjedovic, A.Vargas (K.Ivesic 75') J.Nikolic ((C.Banks 46').

Scorer: J.Adam 40'

Yellow cards: Vargas 30', Adam 80'.
Red cards: None

FRANKSTON:
N.Roganovic, T.Malcolm, D.Black, R. Duckworth, C.Jones (A.SKledar 67'), L.Trebia (B.Ovcin 60'), C.Metcalfe (J.Reichwein 56'), C.Smart, A.Fadljevic, N.Waite, E.Masi.

Scorers: None

Yellow cards: None
Red cards: None

Man of the Match:
Mile Medjevdevic
(Green Gully)

Crowd: 250
Venue: Green Gully Reserve

By Markian Jaworsky
Photos by Daniel Flis

Frankston's Nick Waite tries to hold off Joel Nikolic of Green Gully during the clash at Gully Reserve yesterday.

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FAWKNER BLUES
0 - 5
RICHMOND EAGLES

EAGLES SOAR TO TOP OF FOXTEL CUP TABLE

Fawkner beaten black and blue

Richmond visited Fawkner knowing a victory against their struggling hosts would sent them to the top of the Foxtel Cup table.

The Blues brought in keeper Wesley Coles in place of Pasi Schwalger, and also brought back Fikret Husanovic for his teammate at Bentleigh Greens, Ben Cogger. Richmond were missing the in-form Semir Sivic through injury, and brought George Goutzioulis, Shane Rexhepi and Nick Kalambokis into the starting eleven.

The Eagles, attacking the social club end, made the early running. Kalambokis headed wide a cross from Michael Catalano in the third minute. Four minutes later a cross from Rexhepi saw Jesse Krncevic head over the bar under heavy defensive pressure. Both teams were struggling to find their feet on the bumy Jukes Road pitch, and there were no clear cut chances created before a heat-enforced drinks break midway through the first half.

In the twenty-fifth minute a switch of play from Rexhepi saw Kalambokis head the ball down for Catalano to shoot. Krncevic diverted the strike which Coles did well to get down low for and save. Goutzioulis then lifted his side on his own for a short spell, beggining with a thundering shot onto the crossbar on the run from twenty-five yards on the half hour. Three minutes later another shot from outside the box from Goutzioulis forced a smart save from Coles.

The deadlock was finally broken in the forty-first minute. A free-kick was partially cleared and the ball was put back into the penalty area with a header from Stuart McCluskey. The head of Antun Kovavic then flicked it on to Goutzioulis, eight yards out from goal. His first strike was saved by Coles but he was up on his feet quickly to send the rebound across the keeper and inside the far post.

The second half was only two minutes old when Richmond doubled their lead. Richie Cardozo broke free near the right side corner flag and crossed to the far post where Catalano finished with a neat volley for his fourth goal of the season in as many games for his new club.

Following the second goal, Fawkner had their best spell of the match. In the fifty-fifth minute Ralph Napoli shot over when free on the left after a good overlapping run. A minute later Husanovic shot wide after a good run and square ball laid on by Ismail Nazir. Another minute later Nazir again fed Husanovic who this time forced a good save from Stuart Webster. Richmond went close from a set-piece in the sixty-second minute when Richie Cardozo's corner saw McCluskey head wide.

The Eagles notched a third goal in the sixty-sixth minute. Coles fisted the ball away at a corner which Kalambokis picked up outside the penalty area, chesting the ball down and despatching it into the net. Subsitute Pablo Cardozo chipped onto the top of the crossbar, before the Blues had another brief good spell. Nazir forced Webster into a save low to his right, before Ben Cogger tested the Richmond keeper. Joseph Youssef called upon Webster for a third time in as many minutes, and the Eagles managed to maintain their clean sheet.

Some great work by Catalano, Dimi Tsiaras and Pablo Cardozo brought about a fourth goal in the eighty-third minute. Catalano and Tsiaras exhanged passes, before Catalano found the elder Cardozo on the edge of the box. Cardozo played the ball back to Catalano and peeled into space inside the box, collecting the return pass and slotting past Coles for his fifth goal of the campaign so far.

With five minutes remaining another substitute, Simon Webster, began storming forward. From the top of the box he shot onto the outside the post and Richmond held a firm accsendency. Richie Cardozo had a one-on-one chance with Coles saved three minutes later. The younger Cardozo was not to be denied, getting on the end of another fine move in the final minute. Catalano pushed forward on the left of the box before squaring to the impressive Tsiaras. Tsiaras then laid the ball off to Cardozo who finished with a chip which he followed into the back of the net to assure it's safe arrival. It capped a dominant display by Richmond against opponents who will face an uphill battle to avoid relegation.

Fawkner Blues: W.Coles, M.Bosevski, Z.Younan (V.Juric 79'), C.Tuck, B.Masic (Y.Galanos 56'), J.Principato (B.Cogger 81'), G.Petrovic, J.Youssef, F.Husanovic, I.Nazir, R.Napoli.

Goals: None

Yellow Cards: None
Red Cards: None

Richmond: St.Webster, A.Lines, S.Rexhepi, S.McCluskey, D.Tsiaras, G.Goutzioulis (Z.Cvetkovski 70'), R.Cardozo, A.Kovacic, J.Krncevic (P.Cardozo 70'), M.Catalano, N.Kalambokis (Si.Webster 82').

Goals: Goutzioulis 41' Catalano 47' Kalambokis 66' P.Cardozo 83' R.Cardozo 90'

Yellow Cards: None
Red Cards: None

Man of the Match:
George Goutzioulis (Richmond)

Venue: C.B. Smith Reserve
Crowd: 200

By Mark Boric
Photos by John Punshon

Fawkner keeper Wesley Coles tries hs best to get a hand to another Eagles attack on goals, but unfortunately had to pick the ball out of the net five times the course of the afternoon as Richmond romped its way back to the top of the Foxtel Cup standings.

Melbourne Victory v Channum Dragons

ENTER THE DRAGON

Unknown awaits Victory in Asian Champions League debut

Melbourne Victory will commence its first ever AFC Champions League campaign in a historic match at the Telstra Dome this Wednesday night.

Victory's 6-0 romp of Adelaide United in the 2006/7 A-League final not only saw them crowned as champions, but also earned them the right to participate in Asia's top club competition this season.

For many Victory and A-League fans across Australia, however, their opposition in the initial group stage of the competition are somewhat unknown entities.

With the Asian Champions League featuring 29 clubs from an diverse range of 14 footballing countries, Victory will face tough home and away fixtures in Group G of the contest, against Korea's Chunnam Dragons, Japan's Gamba Osaka and Thailand's Conburi FC.

The Melbourne club's first AFC Champions League appearance will come at home against Chunnam Dragons, as the 2008 schedule kicks-off on March 12th.

Chunnam secured a spot in this season's Asian Champions League group stage for the second season running by defeating K-League rivals Pohang Steelers to lift the Korean FA Cup last year.

Based in Gwangyang, a Korean city in the Jeolla province, the Dragons entered the K-League after they were founded as a club in 1995.

Chunnam has apparently struggled throughout their 13 year history in the K-League, and although managing to place second in 1997, they have had to be content with mid-table mediocrity by the end of most seasons.

Finishing an unsatisfactory tenth out of 14 teams in the K-League and failing to progress from the Group stage in the Asian Champions League, Chunnam's only success last season was their second FA Cup victory in consecutive seasons.

The Dragons' greatest domestic achievements thus far include three Korean FA Cup victories, in 1997, 2006 and 2007, but the team has failed at the final hurdle in several cup competitions, finishing runners-up in the FA Cup (2003), Adidas Cup (1997), League Cup (2000) and Asian Cup Winners Cup (1999).

Although Chunnam's trophy cabinet remains significantly bare, its recent successes in the FA Cup have lured a new coach in the form of Park Hang-Seo to the club.

As a former Assistant Coach of the South Korean national side at the 2002 World Cup Finals, serving under ex-Australian manager, Guus Hiddink, Park replaces existing manager Huh Jung-moo who had ended the Dragon's nine year wait for silverware by winning the FA Cup in 2006.

Chunnam are expected to be the least challenging of Victory's opposition in the group stage, as they are not as technically sound as J-League's Gamba Osaka, and are less of an 'unknown' than 2007 Thailand Premier League Champions Conburi FC.

Wearing bright yellow shirts and black shorts, Chunnam will still provide stiff opposition for the Victory, and the Korean side are inclined to play at a high tempo.

Korean Republic international and Chunnam Dragons defender Kim Chi-Woo celebrates in the K-League.

Victory will have to watch out for 24 year-old Korea Republic left-sided defender Kim Chi-Woo, who has made four appearances for the national team since his international debut in 2006 against Ghana.

Although Kim Chi-Woo has only scored four goals in 87 appearances at club level, his solid defensive work earned him the Most Valuable Player award last season during Chunnam's successful defence of the FA Cup.

The Victory will also have to be aware of the only non-Korean club members of Chunnam; three classy Brazilian forwards – Adriano Chuva, Sandro Hiroshi and Victor Simoes.

Whilst Melbourne Victory's 2007/8 season was slightly disappointing with the team finishing fifth and missing out on the finals series, the AFC Champions League will provide them with a chance to redeem themselves and experience quality opposition from across the Asia region.

Victory will host Korean FA Cup winners the Chunnam Dragons in its historic first AFC Champions League match at Telstra Dome on Wednesday, 12 March (kick off 7:30pm).

Tickets are available from any Ticketmaster outlet, by calling 136 100 or through ticketmaster.com.au.

By Julius D. Ross

Photo by Korean Times

THOMPSON, VARGAS CLAIM VICTORY MEDAL

Marquee player Archie Thompson and resilient defender Rodrigo Vargas were named Melbourne Victory's best and fairest players of the Hyundai A-League 2007/08 season tonight, sharing the prestigious Victory Medal.

Over 350 people filled the Palladium at Crown for the Victory Medal Night, which saw Thompson and Vargas both collect their first Victory Medal, five days before the club's opening AFC Champions League match.

Captain Kevin Muscat and Hyundai A-League Goalkeeper of the Year Michael Theoklitos were joint runners-up in the vote count, which went down to Victory's final match of the season against Sydney FC.

Thompson and Vargas further added to their trophy cabinets, with the former claiming the SEN Player of the Year and the latter receiving the Players' Player of the Year award, proudly sponsored by Anthony and Diana Di Pietro.

Leigh Broxham collected both the Clubman of the Year, proudly sponsored by Fletcher Foods, and The Age Young Player of the Year, while Danny Allsopp took home the club's Golden Boot.

"What a great night it is for Melbourne Victory and two really deserving winners, Archie Thompson and Rodrigo Vargas," Victory Coach Ernie Merrick said.

"They've both had an outstanding year and played exciting football at the both ends of the ground. But more than that, they've been leaders as well as very consistent performers.

"Archie's one of the most talented and exciting strikers in the Hyundai A-League and this award recognises that fact.

"I think Archie's got more to give and he will have a tremendous impact during the AFC Champions League.

"With Rodrigo, what you see is what you get, he's a skillful, uncompromising defender who is super reliable and gives 100 per cent every game.

"This is Rodrigo's second year with the club and he seems to get better and better.

"He's maturing with age and he's a great example to some of the younger players that you can make that step from a young NSL player, to a regular Victorian Premier League player and then jump straight into the Hyundai A-league and be one of the top players.

"Both of them are looking forward to the AFC Champions League and they're a major asset to our team.

"The AFC Champions League gives them an opportunity to fully showcase their skills and hopefully they will lead the team into the Knockout Stage of the competition."

Victory medalist Archie Thompson can look forward to pitting his skills against the best Asia has to offer.

ANOTHER GOOD REASON TO START LIKING MONDAYS AGAIN

New website not too far away either...

goal! Weekly

Gas Bagging, News & Views

TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

With Mike Lilikakis

DORIS and BORIS

Would've made a great tune.
Better lyrics than the little ditty, about Jack and Dianne.
The Cockney lass and German cat burglar.
Doing the rounds in old London town, going of off on Sigue Sigue Sputnik, and freefalling in Bavaria during Oktoberfest.

Ja Ja Ja Ja.

Why this obsession with ze Deutsch?
Beers, BMW, buxom babes, hairy armpits and Beckenbauer.
Meinggudfriendundubershtoppenmitfuehrer being Colonel Katsa, est obsessed with Mr. Johnny Walker and his Blue Label posse. Apparently said Scot is living with Colonel Katsa for some time now.

Rumor in the rank und file has it that they've been best friends for 20 odd years.
Actually, 20 would be even, but any whey.

Well, that is more than friendship, that is legacy.
I had the privilege of hanging with the remnants of a bygone era.
The fellows who laughed their guts out over the saloni when asked a question or advice on football, or culture.

"Watch SBS!", they would retort and laugh some more. A sort of desperate, evil scientist laugh however, would've raised my eyebrows. Thankfully, one understands and appreciates a solid laugh at one's expense in hindsight.
Pah joj mene, we do it now don't we? If you don't, its because you're in therapy.

Off the couch ya mug, the cricket's over and we lost.
To Bollywood Babes.

Fur Shame.

THE CURE

Hippocratic Oath should include something with Robert Smith.
Should be taken with freaked out teased black hair, lipstick smeared all over the moosh, eyes as loopy as Krusty the clown at a Barmitzva.
Psycho Logic dictates that the music you listen to throughout your life, is a distinct reflection of our psyche and controls your thought process throughout the day.

I can't remember the last time I saw a bloke freaking out on the SE "Freeway" whilst listening to Vivaldi or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he grows up he will not depart from it." King Solomon wrote thousands of those doozies. Feed the child Metallica, and sure enough, he'll want to headbutt every third person. Zidane loved Metallica. Now, Maurice Chevalier is dancing a jig saying, "I told you so."

I grew up watching Hong Kong Phoey, and Secret Squirrel.

The notion of playing video games was Galaga at the Elizabeth st. Timezone, or two rectangles hitting a square ball. Sound effects were bleep…..bleep…..every time the rectangle hit said square ball. Now you can roam around through caves, caverns and crevasses, and sniper Russkies or Nazis; Zombies or Legionnaires.

I don't subscribe to Manga or Dragonball Kaka.

TWENTY20

Fed inkum we hear that nearly every day.
Twenty20 this, Twenty20 that.
Funny though, and I mean DUR funny, that the FFA or FFV hasn't tinkled with that idea, and incorporated into something here.

So, thus, and albeit, but mainly therefore; I guess its up to the Tsigan to put the word out, and let someone else take the credit, money and glory. Well they can have all that, and the sleepless night, and the ulcers, botox and heart attacks that go with it.

Hence Tsigan sayeth;
18 teams.
3 groups of 6 teams.
No draws, penalties to decide winner.
Top four go through etc.format, you're not an idiot….figure the rest.
Lots of action, lots of cashola.
A place where all good wogs gather to perve, poke and prod the cattle of football crème, and not have to hang around for 90+ minutes and be enthralled by a 0-0 "result".

Send your cheques or money orders to:
Tsigan's Total Tor
PO BOX 0001
Staircase 3
Middle Earth
MORDOR.

Alternatively, good wogs can just gimme the cash when you see me at Gully Reserve Round 6.
Hvala und F. Haristo mit Danka and Grazi at the back post.

BIGGER IS NACHT BETTER

So, the Government is going to "free up" 90,000 plots to cope with the suburban boom.

The population explosion. The lemon tree in the back yard. The cultural diversity. The super mega markets, each with a pizzeria, fish n chip shop and a charcoal chicken. Screw hospitals and schools. What we need more of are fast cars and stacked up freeways. Less pension homes and retirement villages, just more technology and braindrain.

Let's keep living in fear and unrestraint, tolerance and dependence.
Let's allow resources to be mutilated or raped, and worry about consequences later.
Let's let the status quo dictate the terms of surrender, and bleed liberty and integrity dry.

Rorts are rife. Audits are corrected. Reports go missing. Xenophobia reigns supreme.
At any time, the powers that be can get away with anything. Even when exposed, the truth becomes watered down, like that terrible cordial you'd have at half time in the U13's.

Europeans live in fear. Fear that they are losing identity in indemnity because they are Western Wogs. Say that about the Eastern kind, and you're racist.

I'm ok with being called a Wog.
Most wogs aren't ok being called a Wog.
If you out an expletive before Wog, then that would be considered racist, and I don't care how drunk you are…you'll get slapped. Wog style.

Yes, the Batso and Fappa are making a comeback, and I'm organizing this ringa ding dinga.

Festival Hall
Saturday Night
BE THEEEERE!!!

B MAJOR

Under a serious note, the Argentineans have declared war on themselves and Batistuta is taking the reigns of the new government. Yes, that's bollocks, bullplop, malarkey, falafel and oompa loompa.

He would make the best bet for a dictator though, and boy could they do with one of those right now. Pumpido is the Treasurer. Valdano is Mac Daddy of Foreign Affairs, and Bilardo is Cardinal Envoy to the Vatican. Maradona is reigning in Trade and Tourism. Canniggia is Environment Minister. Ola and ole.

Couldn't say that for the Italians though. Ye, verily they spawned the Argentine flavor for rolling around, mauling opponents and then crying fowl bok bok bokek.
Can't say I'm good for gossip mongering, although I can tell a ripping yarn from time to time, place to place. Hence Tsigan.

There are those who would dare say get a life, or a job, or a title, perhaps an estate.

Tsigan lives in Lolapalooza.

This space for Rent.

T.F

Sir MBK Tsigan the First
Dictator of Lolapalooza
1587-1972

THE SLUETH

Rumor has it that the FFV who are planning on moving house AGAIN are considering a move to 21 Burwood RD Hawthorn, Ironically this is the same building that the Royal Victorian Bowls Association is based at. Hopefully there is no talk of a hybrid game as the AFL and Gaelic football has done, I do not fancy any keeper trying to block a shot with one of those lawn bowls, let alone kicking the thing. The move will only be until the upgrade of facilities at Bob Jane Stadium are complete which will then be their permanent home base.

Another one doing the rounds at the moment has it that Coburg's first loss of the season has cost Conditioning Trainer Ian Webb his job. Apparently some players have blamed the loss on their hard midweek preparation which caused them to be tired during the game against Oakleigh. I find it amusing that the guy who takes his orders from the head coach has been made the scapegoat and the coach continues to draw a wage. Applications for the vacant position could see former Super Nanny's putting their hand up to control those naughty players. TV series to follow.

BOO'S WORLD With Mark Boric

There has been some talk that my proposed Australian football hooligan movie is just a myth. So this week, I have a little preview for you all.

A segment of the script, which takes place in a pub on the day of a Victory versus Sydney FC clash. I have put in the names of the actors I would like to see in brackets after the character's name. Jimmy and Bobby are leaders of the Wurundjeri Way Elite.

Jimmy (Ernie Dingo) and Bobby (Charles "Bud" Tingwell) sit at a bar.
Bobby: Bloody poofs! In our city! It's not right I tell you, Jimmy.
Jimmy: Yeah, you're right mate.
Bobby: We'll get them. When they're having their Mardi Gras re-enactment parade towards the Dome, we'll nail those Cove wankers.
Jimmy: I hope so, Bob. The pigs will be keeping us apart though, after what went down with the Caxton Street Youth.
Bobby: Bloody kids. I was just giving them the beating their parents should have.
Jimmy: Cheeky buggers deserved it.
Bobby: They're lucky that they copped that hiding down here, our Royal Children's Hospital is one of the best in the world.
Jimmy: Bloody oath mate. Give that they may grow.

Donnie (Fat kid from Hey Dad) enters the bar.
Donnie: The Cove! They're here. They're in Young and Jackson's!
Bobby: That's our turf!
Jimmy: That's our sacred site. [pause] It's a sacred site. [pause] A sacred site.
Bobby: Let's go, they will pay for mugging us off like this.
Donnie: I'll go get Stanley.
Bobby: What, you left your knife at home?
Donnie: Not that Stanley. That bloke over there, the kickboxer, Stan "The Man" Longinidis.
Jimmy: They will be sorrier than Kevin Rudd for this.
Jimmy, Bobby, Donnie and Stan exit the pub.

As you can see, the film will cover diverse themes ranging from reconciliation to the Melbourne-Sydney rivalry. With plenty of mindless violence thrown in. I would like to think that this film would include more "glassings" than any other ever produced. In the sequel, when the lads head overseas for a World Cup, there will be some water cannon riot scenes which will require finding a location not under Level Three water restrictions.

Now, once more with a bit more feeling: Football fans cop a spray in Boo's epic hooligan flick.

"How players move between senior clubs will be a suck-it-and-see approach," FFV CEO Mark Rendell said in reports on the new FFV Summer Competition/V League. Is he suggesting senior players prostitute themselves? More on that next week.

Melbourne Victory competes in the Asian Champions League for the first time this week. Will the DVD of the campaign be a part of the Shocking Asia series?

Melbourne Knights are the new Kings of the 3-0 default win, after Fawkner Blues fielded a suspended player in Round One. They beat South Melbourne by the same scoreline last year in a game which was never played.

The A League expansion is looking a little shaky, it may just be the new Youth League coming in next season. The Youth League is set to have just seven teams, with the AIS suprisingly not taking the place of the Phoenix.

The push to move Athletics Victoria to Bob Jane Stadium surfaced again this week. Collingwood would like Olympic Park as their training ground and Eddie Maguire is involved in both organisations. Apart from losing the history of the original Olympic Park, this would be a sad happening for our game as until the new Swan Street Stadium is built, Bob Jane Stadium remains the number one ground in Melbourne purpose built for soccer.

Archie Thompson and Rodrigo Vargas tied for this season's Victory Medal. Leigh Broxham won Young Player of the Year, holding off a late challenge from eleven year old juggling sensation Trey O'Sullivan.

Until next week, keep on keeping on.

KATSA'S KORNER With George Katsamboukas

KATSA'S KORNER 0-4

SUMMER COMP TO OUTSHINE VPL

Let's get the ball rolling for the week with the new proposed Summer VPL League.

The "House of Darebin" is toying with the idea of setting up 12 Regional Teams to play over the Summer Period in 2009.

This will be a dress rehearsal for the abandonment of the Foxtel Cup League as we know it, as if this new competition takes off, the current Foxtel Cup Teams will say Ta-Ta to this competition, and will be replaced with these Regional Teams, made up of 8 in Metropolitan Melbourne and 4 from Rural Victoria.

I heard this whisper some 6 months ago, and was not surprised as many Powerbrokers associated with football in Victoria do not hide their desire to do away with current Foxtel Cup Clubs, (PS I will try and avoid the word "Ethnic Clubs") and replace them with new clubs.

The Powerbrokers form the Foxtel Cup Clubs were far from impressed with this new concept, with only 2 clubs attending the Official "House of Darebin" Launch.

Mark has however, invited these non-attending clubs to "Make a time to come and sit down and speak about it"

He is however "100% confident that this league will run in Summer 2208/09"

Seems like a done deal to me - read quote 1 and then 2 above!

Perhaps the only positive outcome that a Foxtel Cup Powerbroker will receive from this meeting will be a cup of coffee and a biscuit.

The Constitutional Reform that took effect last year now means that clubs no longer have a direct say in which direction football is heading in Victoria, this power has been handed over to the delegates that they voted for.

Excuse my J Walker affected mind, but if the Delegates give the green light to this new League, and replace current Foxtel Cup Clubs with these new regionalised Clubs, the Westgate will be brimming once, and if, this announcement is made.

Fortunately our friends at Vic Roads have come to the party once again and for the Clubs situated in the South East, your journey to the Westgate will now be quicker, as they are extending the Monash Freeway to 4 lanes.

Please be careful along the way, Boo may be climbing the Barriers to fetch the stray balls from KB "Hungry" Bartlett Reserve.

The "House of Darebin" now also has a more centralised second location.

Those Players and Clubs that wish to appeal any decision handed down from the "House of Darebin", after you cough up your $1000 fee to be able to do so, please do not attend the FFV's Darebin Headquarters.

These complex matters are heard at the following Address:
Psychologists Registration Board,
Level 10, 379 Collins Street,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000.

Couches and counselling are available upon request after these Hearings are completed.

Ernie's Boys begin their campaign this Wednesday for the "Happy End Championship" which will see them travel all over Asia to compete.

Asia's weather is very hot and humid and after a detailed study from the coaching brains trust at the Melbourne Victory, they have developed a program to make the players get used to these hot warm conditions.

The heating was pumped up this week

The proposed Summer Comp could well see the sun go down on a few existing VPL clubs.

at the Victory's bike room, where the players rode exercise bikes in this excessive heat.

There was more sweat pouring of the Victory Boys than empty beer cans at local Club strip nights, hopefully this will do the trick.

However Ernie, players are used to hot conditions with many of Melbourne's Night Clubs temperatures being turned right up in the wee hours of the night, creating thirst, which then creates bar sales.

Oh, my apologies Ernie, I forgot that players from the A-League do not attend Night Clubs…

IN THE BOX

Katsa's Email In Box receives some real colourful items during the week, some of which are XXX in nature.

These are deleted as I have always been a very restless spectator, preferring of course to be playing on the field.

One interesting item that appeared though was a video of 11 Year old Trey O'Sullivan make his training debut for the Melbourne Victory.

Ernie has earmarked Trey as a star of the future; hopefully Trey will live up to these expectations.

Now I don't have Ernie's vast knowledge, credentials and experience on the game, however Trey, take some advice from a 700 Game Provisional/State League Reserves Hack, remember success is about being at the right place at the right time, and avoiding the wrong places at any time.

Please explain?

As a 15 Year old, young Katsa used the local park not to refine his developing football skills (by the way, the Toe Poke was my favourite skill), but for enjoying the pleasures that WN Field (Red) had to offer, away from the watchful eyes of his parents.

On one of these escapes to the park, Katsa bumped into a young player who went on to represent Australia at senior level, as well as leaving his mark on the now defunct National Soccer League.

The name of this player will remain anonymous to protect the guilty.

This player offered young Katsa the opportunity to train with him on a daily basis.

Young Katsa had by then developed quite a close friendship with WN Field (Red) and had also recently been introduced to J Walker (Red).

He discussed this offer with both WN Field (Red) and J Walker (Red) who quickly convinced him that there were 2 choices.

A clean, healthy lifestyle, with a possibility of future stardom, or to continue the relationship with these 2 products. I think you all know what my decision was.
So here I am today.

Zero representative honours, Zero any real honours, just 700 rough and tumble games in Victoria's lowest Leagues. -against the States finest Hacks.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SIZZLING START TO SA SEASON

High temperatures in store for first Round

South Australian football players have had to contend with scorching temperatures over the last week and long term weather forecasts say there's more to come.

As the state prepares to embark on the 2008 FFSA Men's Season next weekend, temperatures of 36º or higher have been forecast for at least the next 10 days creating last minute problems for those games being scheduled for a 3pm start.

During the last week on a hot balmy Monday night, the final of the Best Point Cup was played out between hosts Adelaide City and Para Hills Knights.

Even though City drew first blood in the 50' care of a slamming free kick taken 25m out directly in front of goal by Freddy Agius, the normally unbeatable Adelaide City were pushed to the limits by Para Hills who played a hard, fast and very physical game.

Para Hills two missed chances at goal in the first half that could have given them a great win were looking like coming back to haunt them late in the game. With both sides missing opportunities to put the ball in the back of the net at the 65' and 68' minute, City's coach Damian Mori decided to bring himself on in the 70' to change the momentum of the game.

The Knights, who had been competing in both Pre season competitions, were not fazed by the move, giving Mori some extra special attention just to let him know they were there ready for him.

At the 87' in an exciting move by Knights speedster Costalos an all out attacking move forward, passing the ball to the Knights striker burying the ball into the back of the net, unbelievably beating past City's keeper Ben Moore which then took the game to extra time.

Para Hills Knights were here for business and they showed that in the first few minutes of extra time with a brilliant goal set up by young star Joel Allwright. His run down the left, later shrugging off City's defender Jace Cummins gave him the opportunity to pass a ball point blank range to the feet of Knights striker Stam, who almost tripped over the ball as it was dribbled over the line to pass Moore yet again.

The big boys were rattled and as hard as the fight was from the great Adelaide City, it was the Knights in shining armour that took the game all the way successfully doing what most teams can't do, beating the giants Adelaide City to take out the Best Point Pre Season Cup.

Best on ground was undoubtedly Knights Shane Tobias, who was in everything and giving everything he had along with his team mate keeper James McKee.

Round 1 of the FFSA Super League commences on Saturday March 15th and sees Raiders v Croydon, Campbelltown City v Adelaide Blue Eagles in days games and Modbury v White City at 7pm, the heavenly bodies of Adelaide Galaxy v MetroStars at 7:30pm and the Best Point Cup re-match on Monday 17th March Adelaide City v Para Hills.

So put aside all results, lock away all the pres season trophies and get ready for the next seven months of FFSA Men's Super League. It's going to be a tight one.

South Australia

By Nat Adamopoulos

MCINERNEY FORD NIGHT SERIES

A 2nd half hat-trick from former Knights striker Stuart Montgomery guided ECU Joondalup to a come from behind 4-1 victory over the Western Knights in Round 4 of the McInerney Ford Night Series on Friday Night.

In rather wet conditions at Litis Stadium, Montgomery scored three times in the space of 15 minutes to steer ECU to victory before Anthony Jones put the icing on the cake with a headed goal ten minutes from time.

The Knights would again be extremely disappointed with the outcome of the match as they dominated proceedings in a relatively tight first half. Joondalup looked flat at the back and the Knights took advantage, opening the scoring in the 27th minute through a scrappy goal by Matt Allen.

Joondalup coach Willie McNally seemed to rejuvenate his troops at half time as they came out a totally different side in the 2nd half and ultimately took control of the contest.

Montgomery scored his first of many ten minutes into the 2nd half with a wonderful turn and strike that goalkeeper Beau Geerlings had no chance of stopping.

With the match hitting the hour mark, matters only got worse for the Knights as for the 2nd time in this competition their goalkeeper was sent from the field. The referee had no hesitation in sending second choice keeper Geerlings off after he took out the feet of Montgomery with the open goal at his mercy.

Under 18s goalkeeper Larkins took to the field but could only watch the ball go past him as Montgomery dispatched the penalty to put ECU ahead.

Stuart Montgomery was causing his former club plenty of problems and it was only a matter of time before he added his third for the evening when some stand off defending from Jon Mathers allowed Scott Bushby to poke the ball through to Montgomery, who off one step blasted his shot into the net for his hat-trick.

Defender Anthony Jones added to the 2nd half rout when he glanced a header past Larkins with ten minutes to go.

Joondalup will be confident of progressing to the semi finals but must take on heavyweights Perth SC in their final match next weekend.

Floreat Athena 4 v Mandurah City 0

New recruit David Foster had a debut to remember on Friday night, scoring all four goals in Floreat Athena's 4-0 hammering of Mandurah City at Litis Stadium.

In a very one-sided contest, former Swan IC striker Foster scored twice either side of half time to consolidate Floreat's position on top of Group A with one match remaining against Armadale.

Athena were quick out the blocks and it took only six minutes for the opening goal when Foster was on the end of a long ball, looping his header over the advancing Green to make it 1-0.

The speed of Foster up front was a key for Floreat while Adam Bachiller was prominent on the left flank with a number of darting runs forward.

Foster had his 2nd of the night on 23 minutes when he controlled the ball superbly in the box before turning his marker quickly and slotting the ball past goalkeeper Michael Green.

John Migas was also outstanding for Floreat and had a great chance to make it three after he was put through on goal, but with just the keeper to beat, he could only find the side netting.

Michael Green was under constant bombardment from Floreat's attackers as Mandurah tried desperately to hold the deficit to only two goals at the break.

After the interval, Mandurah did show some glimpses of possibly getting their first goal of the Night Series but were either denied by the experienced goalkeeping of Vas Vujacic or on two occasions the woodwork.

Instead it was Floreat who found the back of the net for the third time with Foster the beneficiary of a long ball into the box, which he lobbed over Green for his hat-trick.

On 64 minutes, Foster continued his dream debut heading in from close range after John Migas struck a fantastic free kick off the crossbar which fell to Foster in the six yard box.

Floreat were a class above all match and were unlucky not to increase their tally as the 2nd half elapsed. It will be hard to see anyone stopping them from claiming this year's Night Series after another dominant display.

LIONS COME FROM BEHIND TO BEAT INGLEWOOD

Stirling Lions came back from 0-2 down after only 15 minutes to run out 5-3 winners against Inglewood United in Saturday's pulsating early Night Series game at Dorrien Gardens.

Lee Bamber's side began well and dominated early and they were rewarded on 14 minutes, James Mitsopoulus picked up the ball wide on the left and from 25-yards fired in to the top corner of the net.

It was 2-0 sixty seconds later, Bobby Despotovski sent Renato Rechichi clear down the right and his cross found Bobby Klenkoski on the edge of the box and he finished low past Mark Bentley.

The Lions were shell shocked but went close on 20 minutes; good approach work from Leo Harman sent Jordan Rhodes clear but young keeper Italiano saved well.

Inglewood almost made it three moments later, Klenkoski played in Mathew Worton down the right but his shot was tipped over by the alert Bentley.

It was end to end as both sides pressed, but it was the Lions who reduced the margin on 29 minutes. Alan Muir's corner from the right was met by Kevin Henderson at the back post, his header was superbly saved by Italiano but Rhodes was quickest to the rebound to fire home from close-range. Gaining in confidence the Lions lifted their game and levelled three minutes later, and it was Rhodes again who scored from 10-yards after Muir's corner fell to the midfielder.

Then against the run of play Inglewood retook the lead on 35 minutes, the unmarked Despotovski was found on the left hand side of the box and the former Perth Glory striker kept his composure and lobbed the advancing Bentley.

It was a great game and the Lions had the final chance in first half stoppage time when Leo Harman's shot was cleared of the line by Mitsopoulus, but it was 3-2 to Inglewood at the break.

The second half began like the first, Bentley saving low from Mitsopoulus and Italiano had to be alert to save Dean Evans' 25-yard free kick at full stretch. Young Lions striker Ludovic Boi tried his luck from long-range, his shot dipping inches over the bar, but on 62 minutes the Lions were level again. Muir's cross found Harman whose header towards goal was pushed into his own net by keeper Italiano.

With the game now up for grabs it was the young Lions side that began to dominate and three minutes later they were ahead and what a goal, Boi's free kick from 22-yards curled around the wall and to the back of the net. Then on 70 minutes it was 5-3, Muir's ball sent Harman clear and he finished clinically past Italiano.

It was almost six for the Lions late, which would have been cruel on Inglewood, when the impressive Muir's cross found Harman, his shot cannoning back of the crossbar.

Western Australia

Information by Football West

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goal! Weekly

SUTHERLAND STORM HOME IN TOP-OF-THE-TABLE CLASH

Lyons give Sharks their bite

A fast, frenetic encounter between two of the competition leaders at Seymour Shaw Park saw Sutherland take top spot on the NSW Premier League table with a 2-1 win over Manly United.

The pattern of the game was established early, with hard running and rapid transfer of the ball to the forward line the order of the day. Manly nearly scored an early goal out of nothing, with James Garside reaching the left byline and crossing for Joey Schirripa, whose first-time shot found the angle of post and bar.

Thereafter, it was Sutherland's half. Right-back Michael Katz went wide on four minutes, and left-winger Shane Lyons, full of energy as always, shot over the bar five minutes later. Lyons had another half-chance soon afterwards, when Pedje Bojic's cunning free kick released him in the inside-left channel. From a tight angle, he again cleared the bar by a matter of inches.

It was on the left that Sutherland posed the most danger, with Lyons, Nick Stavroulakis and Ben Spruce often combining purposefully. These three conspired to create another palpable chance at the half-way point of the opening period, but Stavroulakis could not quite control his eventual volley. Neither could he, or the lurking Brad Boardman, get a foot to Jim Bakis's useful right-wing cross shortly afterwards.

There were two more chances for the home side to open the scoring before the interval; first, on 40 minutes, a sweeping crossfield move reached Katz on the right, but again he couldn't get his shot on target. Three minutes later, a cross was half-cleared to Bakis, who volleyed wide of the left-hand post. Just before the half-time whistle, Bakis looked to have been upended in the Manly box, but the Sutherland frontman was instead cautioned for diving.

As he did in their previous game, Manly boss Phil Moss introduced the powerful Dusan Mihajlovic at half-time, to give his side greater bite up front. Manly did indeed pose more of a goalscoring threat in the second period, but Sutherland's command of the game continued.

Stavroulakis and David Huxley both went close in the opening minutes of the second half, and although Mihajlovic engineered a good chance for Robbie Cattanach at the other end, it was Sutherland who broke through on 64 minutes.

An inswinging corner was nearly bundled over the line by a Manly defender, and in the ensuing melee the ball reached Shane Lyons just inside the 18-yard area. The little winger blasted a shot through a crowd of bodies and into the back of Manly's net.

Pleasingly, Sutherland remained committed to attack, and nine minutes later they doubled their lead with a picture-book goal. David Huxley slipped a superb ball through on the right to the overlapping Michael Katz, whose crisp low cross was volleyed home powerfully by Brad Boardman.

Manly continued to rely on the Viduka-esque hold-up play of Mihajlovic; immediately following the second goal, he played Cattanach in once again, but last season's Gold Medal winner was having an off-night, and scuffed his left-foot shot. Then Mihajlovic himself managed a shot at goal, which was deflected wide by a Sutherland defender.

Sutherland continued to throw men forward; Bakis had a snap-shot held on 78 minutes, and Boardman cleverly played in Brendan Gan a minute later, to no avail.

On 81 minutes, Manly grabbed a consolation goal; inevitably, Mihajlovic was the scorer. A deep cross from the right found the Sutherland defence asleep, and Mihajlovic had infinite time to pick his shot and slide the ball past Phil Zabaks.

The tall David Reid came on for Stavroulakis on 83 minutes, and settled things down for Sutherland in midfield, just as they appeared to be losing the plot. Negotiating a final couple of minor scares, Sutherland held on to their 2-1 lead…and went top of the league.

Sutherland Sharks 2 (Lyons, Boardman)
Manly United 1 (Mihajlovic)

Sutherland: Zabaks; Katz, Souris, Bojic, Spruce; Huxley, Stavroulakis (Reid); Gan; Bakis, Boardman, Lyons (Price).

Manly: Swancott; Mailer, Julliard, Busch, Schirripa; R.Williams; Lloyd-Green (M.Williams), Ryan, Shelvin; Garside (Mihajlovic), Cattanach.

MVP Points:
3: Shane Lyons (SS). A torment to the Manly defence throughout, with his elusive twists and bursts of pace. Richly deserved his goal.
2: Jim Bakis (SS). The key link-man in attack for the home side in the second period.
1: Dusan Mihajlovic (MU). Brought a genuine edge to the Manly attack when he arrived in the second half.

RESULTS:
Blacktown City Demons 1 (Bruno Salas 45m) Macarthur Rams 1 (Renato Jelen 95m pen), Marconi Stallions 1 (Ante Deur 35m) Sydney Olympic 3 (Matthew Mayora 2/7/26m), Sutherland Sharks 2 (Shane Lyons 66m Bradley Boardman 75m) Manly United FC 1 (Dusan Mihajlovic 82m), Bankstown City FC 0 Sydney United 0. Penrith Nepean United 4 (Nathan Ralph 22/75m Erick Anabalon 61m Gregory Kondek 83m) West Sydney Berries 1 (John Tsironis 17m), Wollongong FC 2 (Chris Price 85m Osagie Ederaro 90m) APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0

By Mike Salter
in Sydney

SUMMER CUP HOTS UP!

Metro, Taroona, Clarence, Knights out

The Summer Cup in southern Tasmania is hotting up with one round of matches remaining and six out of the ten teams still in contention for a place in Easter Monday's final.

The matches next weekend will be intriguing, therefore, with a number of possibilities depending on the results and score-lines.

South Hobart lead Group A with 8 points from three outings, followed by Hobart Olympic on 7 points and University on 5 points.

Metro and Taroona are out of the running, while University have only a mathematical chance of making it.

On Friday night at KGV Park, Hobart Olympic beat Taroona 5-0 in the early game, but South Hobart then regained first place by over-running University 4-0 in the evening's second fixture.

South Hobart can make the final if they beat second-last Metro next week. They can also make it if they lose, but only if University defeat Olympic by not too great a margin.

In Group B, cup-holders Tilford Zebras are in danger of relinquishing their trophy after they went down 1-0 against New Town Eagles at South Hobart on Saturday.

Former Melburnian George Krambousanos coached the Knights on the weekend.

Zebras retained first place in the group with 8 points, but they have completed their four-match program and must await the outcome of next weekend's games to see if they will play in the final.

Zebras, Kingborough Lions United (6 pts) and Eagles (6 pts) are capable of making the final, whereas Clarence United and Glenorchy Knights are out of the race.

Clarence beat a disappointing Knights 2-0 at South Hobart on Saturday in a game that had nothing riding on it.

If Zebras are to make the final, fourth-placed Clarence would have to beat second-placed Lions next weekend and bottom-side Knights would have to dispose of Eagles.

Olympic raced to a 4-0 half-time lead against Taroona as Ben Backhaus, Chris Tsakiris, Nick Meredith and Rob Lebski all hit the target.

Courtney Winter added the fifth just after the interval.

A first-half hat-trick by left-back David Cooper gave South Hobart a 3-0 lead against University, while substitute Simon Burrett made it 5-0 early in the second half.

New Town Eagles scored their winner against the Zebras in the 7th minute and then survived intense pressure in the second half to earn the three points.

Alexander Leszczynski hit a corner from the left low and hard towards the near post, where Zebras defender Adrian Vennettacci failed to control the ball. His goalkeeper, Frank Mainella, was unable to gather the loose ball before Eagles defender Chris Wass smashed it home from close range.

Glenorchy Knights...lost to Clarence United to remain bottom of Group B.

Ricky Self thumped a pile-driver against the Eagles crossbar in the second half, but that was as close as the unimaginative Zebras came to equalising.

Glenorchy Knights were coached by former Melbourne identity George Krambousanos in the absence of joint player-coaches Josh Fielding and Janko Begovic, who were both in Melbourne for the weekend.

Dwayne Walsh, who was on the verge of signing for a Melbourne club last season, scored the two goals that sank the Knights.

His first came in the 24th minute when Clarence played a long high ball out of defence. Mnyonge Kamba touched it first time to Walsh on the edge of the box and he hit a superb first-time shot past Ben Peter in the Knights goal.

On the stroke of half-time, Walsh made it 2-0 from the penalty spot after Knights sweeper Anthony Grundy had up-ended Paul Bremner on the left of the box.

By Walter Pless
Photos by Walter Pless

A little bit of this, that & the other...

ON THE BOX

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Thurs Mar 13	Chelsea v Derby 6.55 am	Fox Sports 3
Sun Mar 16	Derby v Manchester United 1.55 am	Fox Sports 2
Sun Mar 16	Liverpool v Reading 1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 16	Portsmouth v Aston Villa 1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 16	Sunderland v Chelsea 1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 16	West Ham v Blackburn 1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 16	Arsenal v Middlesbrough 4.10 am	Fox Sports 2
Mon Mar 17	Fulham v Everton 12.25 am	Fox Sports 1
Mon Mar 17	Manchester City v Tottenham 2.55 am	Fox Sports 1

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Wed Mar 12	Melbourne v Chunnam 7.30 pm	Fox Sports 1
Wed Mar 12	Pohang v Adelaide 9.45 pm	Fox Sports 1 (DELAY)

Victory fans get the chance to taste some Asian Champions League football action when it comes to town on Wednesday. All the action can be caught on Fox Sports.

TOTAL FOOTBALL

Thurs Mar 13 7.30 pm Fox Sports 1

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The v1.08 is now available in stores for the 2008 season. For PUMA Stockist please contact 1800 811 511.

HOTTEST TV SHOW IN THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL EXCLUSIVE TO SETANTA SPORTS

The new hit show for Australian viewers is I'm On Setanta Sports starring the popular puppet, Jose Mourinho. Setanta Sports topical parody segment is telecast twice weekly on Sundays at 10.55am and 5.55pm.

Comedian Mario Rosenstock presents sports news like no other with his character puppet, Jose Mourinho (former Manager of Chelsea Football Club). Mourinho's exit last year from Chelsea sent a ripple throughout the football world. The highly successful and hugely popular manager was the perfect candidate to interpret all the latest dramas, news and highlights.

It's been a hit in England, Ireland and the US on Setanta Sports channels and now Australia has the opportunity to be a part of this phenomenal 'don't miss' segment. Each week a new show features the headlines in football and with great satirical flair has become more often than not the only relevant opinion on news of the day.

Irish comedienne Mario Rosenstock can now be seen in Setanta's new hit football show.

Often it's what the puppet is saying we are all thinking and secures hilarious and entertaining results that have viewers cheering for more!

London-based Mario Rosenstock, the actor, comedian, impressionist and musician is the voice of Mourinho which includes full body, real hair and real attitude.

Mario first performed an impersonation of José Mourinho in a parody of a song from the musical Joseph. This spread like wildfire on Internet message boards and eventually it was played on a Sky Sports broadcast.

Mourinho heard the song and liked the impersonation so much he had Mario perform a private show for him and the Chelsea squad. Mario later released, with Mourinho's blessing, a single version of José and his Amazing Technicolor Overcoat.

He has also released another song (I Sign a Little Player or Two) on the internet with a parody of Mourinho in an interview then breaking into song.

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CHASING IT WITH JASON

Early lessons learnt in the school of hard knocks

A new batch of whiz kids from Canberra's Australian Institute of Sport are taking the Foxtel Cup by storm in 2008, as it leads the table after 4 rounds of competition.

Last year, Foxtel Cup fans were treated to the delightful skills of James Holland and Taj Minniecon – both of whom were later snapped up by A-League franchises and made impressive appearances for the Newcastle Jets and Queensland Roar, respectively.

In a successful debut year in Australia's top domestic company Holland went on to add a A-League championship winners medal to his 2007 VPL Under 21 Player of the Year Award, while Minniecon caught the eye of football fans across Australia with some dazzling displays on the wing for the Roar, as it mad a charge to its first finals campaign.

One player who has picked up the mantle at the AIS since the departure of Holland and Minniecon has been the versatile striker Jason Naidovski. Having scored in every game of the Foxtel Cup this season, Naidovski now leads the Top Scorer's list with six goals to his credit thus far, and at this current rate will surely follow in the successful footsteps of previous Institute alumni and be snapped up for bigger and better things.

Even though the potential exists for Naidovski to go all the way, it hasn't been all so rosy for the 18 year old striker from Sydney in the early stages of his football career.

After being selected in the Olyroos squad Naidovski incurred an anterior cruciate ligament injury to his left knee, which put him on the sidelines for nearly ten months, and forced him to miss the first stage of the Olympic qualifiers in Vietnam. He only just managed to play his first match back from injury in a practice game in January and apart from keeping injury free, Naidovski now has his sights firmly set on regaining selection to the national set up for the underage Asia Cup, which takes place in November.

But, more time spent in rehabilitation than the football field brought about the usual process of reflecting and questioning the long term picture - which you'd expect from a player contemplating the uphill battle of a long term injury. If anything, Naidovski believes it's actually made him a stronger player and more determined than ever before to realise his ambitions of one day playing in the A-League, or perhaps even the German Bundesliga or Holland's Erie Division.

Asked how he coped on the comeback trail Naidosvski said, "I found it really hard at the start. The experience of being injured for so long has definitely made me a more grateful person. A lot of things go through your head and how you want to apply yourself on the field. It's definitely made me stronger mentally as well, and not being in a team environment for nearly ten months opened up my eyes. I'm not saying I was like that before, but it really does make you appreciate that you can't take things for granted."

"Every time I go on the field now I try and take all the opportunities I can get and I try and apply that to things off the football field as well."

\ The early path of Naidovski's football saw him playing in the ranks of Bankstown, Marconi and the NSW Institute program before making his way as a permanent resident to the AIS in Canberra.

On top of training with his club during his junior days, partaking in extra early morning sessions with former NSL greats, St George's Dez Marton and Marconi's Zlatko Nastevski, have certainly refined the powerful forward's football education – especially when it comes to punishing opposition defences with his finishing in the penalty area.

Foxtel Cup scoring sensation Jason Naidovski of the AIS is set to capitalize on his football opportunities after a serious injury forced the striker to spend some time on the sidelines.

His Macedonian father and brother Bobby have also paid their dues with shooting practice at every other opportunity.

AIS Coach Steve O'Connor, who was last week announced as the new Sydney FC Technical Director, thinks he has a good balance when asked why the boys are doing so well in the results department this year.

"I think there's a good blend of some of the older players that were there last year with some of the younger players that have come in this year. There's definitely more consistency and we seem to be doing well at this stage of the year."

While full of praise for the development of the squad in general, O'Connor and was also pleasantly satisfied with young Naidovski's recovery from the long lay off. "We've been working on a few things - like our movement in the box, getting forward, keeping possession, positioning in the danger area - and it's good to see he's been getting on the end of a few things this season. He's got quite powerful shooting and he's pretty versatile. We've still got a few things to work on, but these things will come and we've just got to keep chipping away at it."

"Jason's also just come back from an anterior cruciate ligament injury, so we've got to be a bit careful with him. He's managed to score a few already this year, so that's another exciting aspect."

With the AIS running its player contracts on a yearly basis, Foxtel Fans have a great chance to witness the attacking prowess of Jason Naidovski for a little while longer before the talented youngster possibly lands a spot in a A-League roster in the not too distant future.

By James Taylor

Photos by John Punshon

TARTAN TALK with Nic Townsend

ENGLAND

ENGLISH CLUBS CONQUER EUROPE.

Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea all progressed to the Champions League quarterfinals this week meaning that once again English clubs will dominate the world's premier club competition. Unless Liverpool blow a two-goal lead over Inter Milan on Tuesday night, then England will account for half the clubs in the final eight. England is already the only country whose four entrants all made it past the group stages and it looks like all four entrants will be quarter finalists.

Last season EPL sides accounted for three of the four spots in the semi finals and only AC Milan managed to prevent the trophy from leaving the mainland. Considering the huge sums of money being banded about in the island nation it seems only naturally that such dominance is reflected on the pitch. With its clubs already spending more than their counterparts in Spain and Italy, there seems increasingly little doubt that the EPL provides the highest standard for football on the globe.

RETIREMENTS, BOTH RUMOURED AND CONFIRMED.

Sir Alex Ferguson was forced to address the retirement issue again this week after it was speculated that he planned to call it a day in three years time. Seeing as most managers are only three defeats away from getting sacked, planning ahead so far ahead seems a little presumptuous. Ferguson later refuted the claims stating he has made no decisions about his future.

However while Ferguson avoided the retirement question this week, Teddy Sheringham shocked the football world by announcing his retirements. It came as a shock because few people knew he was still playing. When Sheringham stopped appearing in the first team sheet at West Ham many assumed he had quietly slinked off into the sunset.

Turns out he actually signed with another club: Colchester United. For the past nine months he's been trying to save Colchester in a relegation scrap at the bottom of the Championship. Sheringham currently holds

Teddy Sheringham: Played enough games in his lifetime to put two careers together.

the record for the oldest player to play a premiership match, but at the age of 42 he has given up on trying to catch up with Stanley Matthews record as oldest player ever.

Sheringham's announcement comes in the same week that former Bolton midfielder Jay-Jay Okocha also announced his imminent retirement.

Another star who quietly disappeared, the Nigerian International surprised many when he revealed he had actually been playing for Hull this season.

YOUNGER EVERY YEAR

In such a tight competitive atmosphere with so much money at stake clubs are extending their scouting networks further and taking bigger risks in their signings. But this week premiership clubs reached a new low. Having scored 95 goals in only 40 games, it shouldn't be too surprising that Arsenal, Portsmouth and Reading are all currently courting young striker Ryan Gates. The only problem is that Gates plays for Havant and Waterlooville Under-12s. But preadolescent hasn't stopped all three clubs from trying to recruit the 12 year-old to their respective youth academies. At this rate it won't be long until clubs start using ultrasound scans to find for their next central defender.

SCOTLAND

BORUC BOOKED...AGAIN.

Celtic keeper Artur Boruc has once again gotten into trouble for provoking opposition fans. This time the Polish international received a yellow card after inciting Hibs supporters after Celtic's 2-0 win at Easter Road. Referee Iain Brines delivered the card after the final whistle as Boruc clapped and gesturing towards the home fans. This is now the seventh time that Boruc has gotten into trouble for taunting crowds.

In 2006 Boruc was cautioned by police for breach of the peace after making the sign of the cross before kick-off. As a devout Catholic this has always been Boruc's traditional pre match ritual and wouldn't normally be an issue expect he made it at Ibrox right in front of Rangers' fans during an Old Firm derby. Despite the police warning Boruc has continued to make the cross before all matches causing further controversy whenever they play Rangers. Towards the end of the 2006-07 season, when Celtic had already clinched the title, Boruc ran across Ibrox with a Celtic SPL Champions flag.

Finally at the last Old Firm derby in October Boruc refused to shake hands with Rangers' players after the match. Recent form suggests this won't be the last time Boruc clashes with rival supporters.

The man between the poles at Celtic, Poland's Artur Boruk.

EAST STIRLINGSHIRE

All the way at the opposite end of Scottish League Football, East Stirlingshire failed in their bid to nab John Hartson as their next manager. The former Welsh international retired last January after a career playing for Arsenal, West Ham, Celtic and West Bromwich amongst others.

Having finished last in the Scottish Third Division for the past five seasons, East Stirlingshire have been stigmatised with the title 'Britain's worst football team'. This season the job as manager would come with the added pressure of coaching for the club's survival in the Scottish League. Unlike in England, Scottish clubs cannot be relegated out of the League altogether. Hence once East Stirlingshire hit the bottom of Division Three they've been allowed to languish there. Although as of 2005 a new rule stipulates that any team that finishes last two seasons running will be demoted to 'associate member'. They will then be barred from voting at league meetings and after another two seasons the other clubs will vote on whether to allow the club to remain in the League. The rule was enacted at the end of last season however the Scottish League agreed to suspend the punishment for another year. The Shire currently lie second last with only goal difference separating them from bottom placed Forfar. If they do finish last again this season than they will be automatically demoted to 'Associate member' and will have another two seasons to prove they deserve to remain in the Scottish League.

Hartson has possibly baulked at the prospect of starting a career in management at such a low level, but that is not to say East Stirlingshire managers don't go on to achieve greater things. In 1974 Sir Alex Ferguson started his managerial career at the Shire on a wage of £40 per week.

John Hartson: Fish & Chip shop profits are set to sore with the news the Welshman is contemplating a move North of the Border.

Gossip and Transfer Speculation from the English Media...

Former England footballer Paul Gascoigne has been released from hospital after being detained under mental health laws because of potentially threatening behaviour, it was reported Saturday.

The Daily Mirror said Gascoigne, 40, had gone to stay with his father John in northeast England after his release yesterday from a specialist hospital in Darlington.

Gascoigne was sectioned on February 20 after he was said to be acting as a "potential menace" at a hotel in Gateshead, northeast England.

Everton striker James Vaughan looks set to be sidelined for the remainder of the season after suffering a knee injury while training ahead of the UEFA Cup defeat to Fiorentina.

The 19-year-old has been flown to America to see renowned knee specialist Dr Richard Steadman.

"The knee just locked a couple of times in training and it is terrible luck for the boy," said Toffees manager David Moyes.

Vaughan has suffered a string of injury problems since becoming the Premier League's youngest goalscorer with a debut goal against Crystal Palace.

As well as knee injuries he has missed large parts of the current season with a dislocated shoulder.

AS Roma's stunning 2-1 victory at the Santiago Bernabeu to knock Real Madrid out of the Champions League has got everyone believing that there is once again a title race in Italy.

Roma travel to Napoli on Sunday a week after their hosts did them a huge favour in becoming the first team this season to beat leaders Inter Milan and helping reduce the capital-based club's deficit at the top to six points.

And with confidence high following their 4-2 Champions League aggregate victory over the Spanish champions, and with Inter in the midst of an injury crisis in defence, Roma are understandably feeling confident.

Barnsley manager Simon Davey is convinced his side can repeat their FA Cup heroics of Anfield and beat Premiership giants Chelsea at Oakwell on Saturday.

The Championship side will be massive underdogs against Avram Grant's team when the two teams meet to do battle for a semi-final place at Wembley.

Davey admits he has never been to the home of English football but reckons this could all change if his side produce another shock like the one which saw them beat Liverpool at Anfield in the fifth round courtesy of Brian Howard's last-gasp goal.

Davey went to watch Chelsea beat Olympiakos in the Champions League in midweek and admits the experience was "unnerving".

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